

NIFA in the News – Week of June 3, 2013

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In the News

Amazing Grazing project funded (High Plains Journal 5/24). Kansas Farmers Union has received a grant from the North Central Risk Management Education Center. KFU will use these funds to support Kansas livestock producers challenged by rising input costs, intensifying drought conditions and increasing land prices. The North Central Risk Management Education Center, supported by USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, awards grants through a competitive application and review process. [Link](#)

Initiatives to study effects of climatic variability on cattle (Agri-News 5/28). The University of Wisconsin in Madison received \$9.9 million over five years to study the environmental impact of various dairy production systems and develop best management practices for producers to implement at the farm level. The University of Wisconsin is partnering in the project with the University of Arkansas, Cornell University, the University of Michigan, North Carolina A&T University, Pennsylvania State University and the University of Washington, along with four USDA Agricultural Research Service laboratories, the U.S. Department of Energy and the industry-sponsored Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy. [Link](#)

Summer annuals benefit dairy farmers (Capital Press 5/30). Seeding summer annuals in the pasture can benefit dairy farmers, an agronomist says. The annuals tolerate drought, fill feed gaps during the summer, add biomass to the crop, fit well into crop rotations and can be used for grazing, silage or grain. Heather Darby, an agronomist at University of Vermont Extension and co-owner of an organic farm, described research she has led comparing different kinds of annuals. A \$2.8 million grant from USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture involved 14 farms and four research facilities. [Link](#)

USDA funds research initiatives to study effects of weather, climate on beef and dairy cattle (High Plains Journal 5/31). The U.S. Department of Agriculture awarded \$19.5 million to support research, education and Extension activities associated with climate solutions in agriculture aimed at the impacts of climate

variability and change on dairy and beef cattle. USDA remains focused on carrying out its mission, despite a time of significant budget uncertainty. Today's announcement is one part of the Department's efforts to strengthen the rural economy.

[Link](#)

Healthy Communities Coalition's McGill helps rural Nevadans find food, get back on track (Reno Gazette Journal 6/2). Spanning Lyon and Storey counties and some of Mineral County, the Healthy Communities Coalition deals with issues that affect the small communities of rural Nevada. McGill steers the coalition, helping agencies apply for grants, set up programs, run food banks and community gardens. Generally, she helps the poorest, oldest, youngest, hungriest and anybody else. A lot of the funding for the gardens comes from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture to engage communities in creating sustainable local food systems. [Link](#)

New DNA profiling technique beefs up cattle genomics (AgriNews 6/2). A pioneering genomics technique developed at Cornell University to improve corn can now be used to improve the quality of milk and meat, according to research published May 17 in the online journal, PLOS ONE. A team led by Ikhide Imumorin, an assistant professor of animal genetics and genomics in the Department of Animal Science at Cornell, is the first to apply a new, inexpensive yet powerful genomics technique to cattle called genotyping-by-sequencing. The protocol contains only four basic steps from DNA to data, and Imumorin's work demonstrated it can generate enough markers to put cattle genomics on the fast track. The study was funded by Pfizer Animal Health, now Zoetis Inc., a grant from the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture and USDA Federal Formula Hatch Funds appropriated to the Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station. [Link](#)

Veggies Are Key to Long Life (Med Page Today 6/3). People who followed a vegetarian diet had a lower risk for death from any cause, and men in particular also saw benefits for cardiovascular mortality, a large prospective study found. Among individuals who adhered to any type of vegetarian diet, the adjusted hazard ratio for all-cause mortality was 0.88, according to Michael J. Orlich, MD, and colleagues from Loma Linda University in California. The study was supported by the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

Vegetarian diet linked to longer lifespan (NHS Choices 6/4). "Veg diet key to living longer," reports today's Daily Express front page headline. Its story is prompted by a large, well-designed, long-term study into vegetarian dietary patterns and their effects on reported mortality (death). The main finding was that vegetarians had a 12% reduction in the risk of death from any cause compared with non-vegetarians. The study was carried out by researchers from Loma Linda University, California and was funded by the US National Cancer Institute and National Institute of Food and Agriculture. It was published in the peer-reviewed journal, JAMA Internal Medicine. [Link](#)

Grant winners in Montana, Wyoming, Idaho will do research to benefit producers (Ag Weekly 6/4). At a recent Western SARE meeting, the Administrative Council approved 27 research and outreach grant proposals for a total of almost \$1.9 million. "The Western SARE receives its funding through two specific recurring line items in the USDA-NIFA budget," she said. NIFA, or the National Institute for Food and Agriculture, is agriculture's equivalent of the National Science Foundation. "The national - USDA-NIFA-SARE program, and thus Western SARE, has been continually funded through these line items for 25 years," Clary commented. Western SARE currently receives approximately \$3 million per year through the USDA-NIFA Sustainable Agriculture Research line item, and, \$1 million per year through a USDA-NIFA Cooperative Extension line item. [Link](#)

Pacific Gateway Center offering free farmer program for beginners (Pacific Business News 6/4). The Pacific Gateway Center in Honolulu is offering a farmer program for beginners and will accept anyone with little farming experience, especially immigrants. The Pacific Gateway Center is a Honolulu nonprofit that supports immigrants, refugees and low-income residents, many of whom are interested in farming. The center, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, is offering this training program free of cost. [Link](#)

Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship: Multiple possibilities (AgriView 6/5). The Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship is an opportunity for beginning farmers to "earn while they learn." It's the first legally recognized, fully accredited apprenticeship for farming in the U.S. This GrassWorks initiative provides a "guided pathway" to independent farm ownership, or as an alternative, a management post on a grass-based dairy. DGA is funded by a federal grant from the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture within USDA. Tomandl notes that Wisconsin's program may serve as a "national template," for expansion nationwide. [Link](#)

